

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph found on page 44, lines 4-14 of the specification with the following paragraph:

-- Partial hydrolysis of EPS was performed in 50 mM TFA at 100°C for 6 hrs. The sample was dried and dissolved in water at a concentration of 35 mg/ml. The non-hydrolysed EPS was precipitated with isopropanol (1:1 v/v). After centrifugation at 10 000 rpm for 10 min the supernatant was dried down to half of the volume. The sample is filtered through 0.45 µm filter and separated on the DIONEX ~~Dionex~~TM PA1 column. A sample volume of 23 µl was loaded on the column and eluted with buffer A (0.1 M NaOH) and buffer B (1 M Na-acetate in 0.1 M-NaOH) with the following gradient: 0-25 min: isocratic with 5% B, 25-34 min: 5-8% B, 34-34.001 min: 8-100% B, 34.001-44: isocratic 100% B, 44-44.001; 100-5% B, 44.001-54: isocratic 5% B. During the run the peaks were automatically desalted by a DIONEX ~~Dionex~~TM desalting device CMDTM and collected. The hexaglucon was analysed by NMR.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 50, line 28 and ending on page 51, line 7 of the specification with the following paragraph:

-- The viability of *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* 808 strain in the presence of EPS was tested following spray drying. An overnight pre-culture of *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* 808 strain was used to inoculate a fermentation chamber containing 20 litres of lactic medium supplemented with 1% sucrose. The culture was then incubated for 72 hours without stirring. FIG. 19 shows the viability of *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* 808 strain before and after spray drying in the presence of 5% GLUCIDEX ~~Glucide~~TM, 10% GLUCIDEX ~~Glucide~~TM, and 10% skimmed milk. GLUCIDEX ~~Glucide~~TM is a blend of nutritive saccharides, produced by controlled enzymatic hydrolysis which are routinely used in the food industry, particularly in milk fermentation products. GLUCIDEX ~~Glucide~~TM can be used as a sweetening agent but preferably as a spray-drying saccharide rich syrup to improve the technical performance of the composition of the present invention, taste and cost effectiveness.--